

The Life and Writings of St. Peter,*

WITH NOTES BY THE REV. W. H. COLOGAN.

I. ST. PETER IN THE GOSPELS.

The Change of Name Foretold.



AND Andrew the brother of Simon Peter was one of the two who had heard of John, and followed him. He findeth first his brother Simon, and saith to him: "We have found the Messias," which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus looking upon him, said: "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas,"† which is interpreted Peter.

Peter, the Chief.

St. Mark iii. 14-16. St. Matthew x. 2.

(*St. Mark.*) And He made that twelve should be with Him: and that He might send them to preach. And He gave them power to heal sick-

* In the narrative of the public life of Christ, Peter's words and acts receive a great deal more attention than those of any one else. St. John comes next to him in this respect: but St. John is mentioned altogether but thirty-three times, while St. Peter is spoken of twenty-three times by St. Matthew, eighteen times by St. Mark, twenty by St. Luke, and thirty by St. John: in all, ninety-one times.

Simon, the son of Jona and brother—probably younger brother—of Andrew, was a fisherman of Bethsaida, a small town on the bank of the Sea of Galilee. He and his brother were men of good and pious dispositions, and were disciples of St. John the Baptist.

† THOU SHALT BE CALLED CEPHAS. Of the names imposed by God some are prophetic and denote the office which the bearer of the name is to fulfil. Of this class are the names *Israel*, a prince before God; *Joshua*, a saviour; *Abraham*, the father of a multitude; *Jesus*, who "shall save His people from their sins;" *Cephas*, the rock, or foundation of the Church. It is, therefore, full of significance that our Blessed Lord on His first meeting with Simon should have solemnly promised him a new name, and that name one which had been applied to Himself in prophecy, and which very aptly denoted the prominent part which that humble fisherman was to play in the history of the Church, and the exalted office which he was to fulfil. St. Ambrose says: "Christ is the rock, but yet He did not deny the grace of this name to His disciple, that he should

ness and to cast out devils. And to Simon He gave the name Peter.

(*St. Matthew.*) The names of the Apostles are these: the first, Simon,‡ who is called Peter.

Peter's Call to the Apostleship.

St. Luke v. 1-11.

And it came to pass, that when the multitudes pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Genesareth, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets. And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, He desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting He taught the multitudes out of the ship.

Now when He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." And Simon answering, said to Him: "Master, we have laboured all the

be Peter, because he has from the Rock, firm constancy, immovable faith."

‡ THE FIRST, SIMON. "The *first* of all and the chief of them," says St. Chrysostom. In each of the four lists of the Apostles given by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke (vi. 14) and Acts (i. 13), St. Peter is named in the first place, Judas in the last; the other ten are not named in any special order. Origen, commenting on this, asks what should be thought the cause of this order? And he answers that it was because Peter was "more honoured than the rest." This order, too, is observed wherever Peter is mentioned together with any other of the Apostles: his name is always put in the place of honour; "Peter, James and John;" "Peter and John;" "Simon Peter, and Thomas, and Nathaniel and the two sons of Zebedee;" "Peter and the rest;" "Peter and the Apostles;" "Peter standing up with the eleven;" &c. Sometimes, indeed, the sense requires that the more important person should be named last; in such cases Peter's name is in the last place: "I indeed am of Paul; and I of Apollo; and I of Cephas (Peter); and I of Christ;" "the rest of the Apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas."

night, and have taken nothing; but at Thy word I will let down the net."

And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of fishes which they had taken: and so also were James and John the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things they followed Him.*

Healing of Peter's Wife's Mother.

St. Matthew viii. 14, 15.

And when He was come into Peter's house [at Capharnaum], He saw his wife's mother† lying, and sick of a fever; and He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered to them.

* THEY FOLLOWED HIM. When St. Peter first came to know our Blessed Lord and received the call to be His disciple, he obeyed, followed His divine Master, listened to His preaching, and frequently went with Him; but he still followed his calling of fisherman and spent much of his time with his boat and his net on the waters of Genesareth. But being called a second time in a more special manner and to a closer following of His Divine Master, "leaving all things," his trade and livelihood, and his home, he followed Him. Towards the close of our Lord's public life He was telling His disciples with what difficulty the rich would enter into the kingdom of Heaven, and "Peter, answering, said to Him: 'Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee; what, therefore, shall we have?' And Jesus said to them: 'Amen, I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

† HIS WIFE'S MOTHER. Of all the Apostles, Peter is the only one mentioned in the New Testament as having been married. Tradition tells us that on receiving the distinct call from our Lord, he "left all," even his wife, to follow him. St. Clement of Alexandria relates that the wife of Peter suffered martyrdom for the sake of Christ, her husband being present and exhorting her to fortitude.

Raising of the Daughter of Jairus.

St. Luke viii. 41-56.

And behold there came a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at the feet of Jesus, beseeching Him that He would come into his house: for he had an only daughter almost twelve years old, and she was dying.

And it happened, as He went, that He was thronged by the multitudes. And there was a certain woman having an issue of blood twelve years, who had bestowed all her substance on physicians, and could not be healed by any: she came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment; and immediately the issue of her blood stopped. And Jesus said: "Who is it that touched Me?" And all denying, Peter and they that were with Him said: "Master, the multitudes throng and press Thee, and dost Thou say, Who touched Me?" And Jesus said: "Somebody hath touched Me: for I know that virtue is gone out from Me." And the woman, seeing that she was not hid, came trembling, and fell down before His feet, and declared before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was immediately healed. But He said to her: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go thy way in peace."

As He was yet speaking, there cometh one to the ruler of the synagogue, saying to him: "Thy daughter is dead; trouble Him not." And Jesus, hearing this word, answered the father of the maid: "Fear not; believe only, and she shall be safe." And when He was come to the house, He suffered not any man to go in with Him but Peter, and James, and John,‡ and the father and mother of the maiden. And all wept and mourned for her. But He said: "Weep not; the maid is not dead, but sleepeth." And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. But He taking her by the hand, cried out, saying: "Maid, arise." And her spirit returned, and she rose immediately. And He bid them give her to eat. And her parents were astonished, whom He charged to tell no man what was done.

‡ PETER, JAMES AND JOHN, the three privileged Apostles who were frequently in His company when all others were excluded.

Peter Walks upon the Waters.

St. Matthew xiv. 23-33.

Jesus obliged His disciples to go up into the boat, and to go before Him over the water, till He dismissed the people. And having dismissed the multitude, He went up into a mountain alone to pray. And when it was evening, He was there alone. But the boat in the midst of the sea was tossed with the waves: for the wind was contrary.

And in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them walking upon the sea. And they, seeing Him walking upon the sea, were troubled, saying: "It is an apparition:" and they cried out for fear. And immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying: "Be of good heart: it is I, fear ye not." And Peter making answer, said: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters." And He said: "Come." And Peter, going down out of the boat, walked upon the water to come to Jesus. But seeing the wind strong, he was afraid: and when he began to sink, he cried out, saying: "Lord, save me." And immediately Jesus, stretching forth His hand, took hold of him, and said to him: "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" And when they were come up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat came and adored Him, saying: "Indeed Thou art the Son of God."

Peter's Faith.

St. John vi. 48-7c.

Jesus said: "I am the bread of life.* Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is My flesh for the life of the world."

The Jews therefore strove among themselves,

* I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE. Our Lord is "the bread of life" for two reasons: first, because faith in Him is the root and foundation of holiness, and the beginning of supernatural life; secondly, because He nourishes and sustains that supernatural life by giving His Sacred Body and Blood to be the food of our soul, that as our bodies live the natural life by food and drink, so our soul may live the life of grace by being united with the Body and Blood of Christ: "My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed."

saying: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said to them: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever."

These things He said teaching in the synagogue, in Capharnaum. Many therefore of his disciples hearing it, said: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?"

But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at this, said to them: "Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing.† The words that I have spoken to you, are spirit and life. But there are some of you that believe not." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray Him. And He said: "Therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to Me, unless it be given him by My Father."

After this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then Jesus said to the twelve: "Will you also go away?"‡ And

† THE FLESH PROFITETH NOTHING. This does not mean that the Flesh of Christ profiteth nothing; it would be blasphemy to say so. But when, in the Holy Scriptures, "the flesh" and "the spirit" are opposed to each other, the one means the mind of man unenlightened by grace, the other, "the spirit," is the mind so enlightened. Thus St. Paul says: "The wisdom of the flesh is death; the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace." Therefore the meaning of this passage is, that the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, just taught by our Lord, is too deep a mystery to be received by man left to himself; it requires a strong act of faith with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

‡ WILL YOU ALSO GO AWAY? Our Lord addressed this question to the twelve. Simon Peter at once answered in the name of the others. Mr. Allies says: "It is the custom of the Evangelist, when they record anything which touches all the Apostles,

Simon Peter answered Him: "Lord, to whom shall we go?*" Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

St. Peter's Confession of Faith.

St. Matthew xvi. 13-19.

And Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi: and He asked His disciples, saying: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?"

But they said: "Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Jesus saith to them: "But whom do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art the Christ,† the Son of the living God." And Jesus answering, said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter;‡ and upon this rock I will

almost invariably to exhibit Peter as singly speaking for all, and representing all." After giving several instances, all of which are to be found in these pages, he continues: "A very remarkable occasion occurs where our Lord had been telling to His disciples the parable of the watchful servant, upon which Peter said to Him, 'Lord, dost Thou speak this parable to us, or likewise to all?' and the reply seems by anticipation to express the very office which Peter was to hold, 'Who, then, is the faithful and wise steward whom his Lord setteth over His family, to give them their measure of wheat in due season?' Now it looks not like an equal, but a superior, to anticipate the rest, to represent them, to speak and act for them. St. Chrysostom drew the conclusion long ago: 'What, then, says Peter, the mouth-piece of the Apostles? Everywhere, impetuous as he is, the leader of the bond of the Apostles, when a question is asked of all, he replies.'"

* LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO? A very beautiful act of faith. The Jews had said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" St. Peter also seems to have been puzzled; but note the difference—the Jews understood not, and went away; St. Peter also understood not, but yet he believed.

† THOU ART THE CHRIST. Our Lord had asked His disciples whom they believed Him to be. Peter answering, not of his own knowledge, but of a special revelation from God, made that splendid confession of faith, "Thou art the Christ," that is, the Anointed One, the long looked-for Saviour, "the Son of the living God."

‡ THOU ART PETER. This and the following passages form one of the great texts proving the primacy of St. Peter, his supreme authority, under Christ, over the Church. On first seeing Simon, even before he was called to be an Apostle, our Lord said to him, "Thou art Simon, thou shalt be called Peter." Now He again

build My church, and the gates of hell shall not

addresses him by the name he had received at his circumcision, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona" (Simon, son of John). Then He makes the solemn change of name, "And I say to thee that thou art Peter." The word Peter (or *Cephas*) means a *rock*; why did our Lord call Simon "a rock?" He explains what He means: "And upon this rock (*i. e.*, upon you, Simon) I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Our Lord, in His address to Peter, is speaking of the spiritual Church made up of human beings, the society of true believers in Jesus Christ. To found this society He came upon earth; He acquired it, gained it, by His Precious Blood. To ensure that His Church should last for ever, He was going to raise it upon a firm and immovable foundation, against which the devil and all the powers of hell might rage with all their fury but should never be able to overcome it. And Simon, the first and chief of the Apostles, was to be to the Church of Christ what a firm foundation is to a building. The Church was to rest upon him, to be kept firmly together by him. This was to be through Simon's firmness in the faith, and through his supreme authority; guided and taught by him, the Church should never fall into error; ruled by him it should be kept in unity, because he had divinely-given authority over all.

St. Cyprian (A. D. 248) referring to this text says: "There is one Church founded by the Lord Christ upon Peter, for the origin and purpose of unity." St. Jerome (A. D. 290), writing against the heretic Jovinian, says: "Therefore is one chosen out of the twelve, that the occasion of schism might be taken away;" and in a letter to Pope Damasus the same holy Doctor writes: "I, following none as first except Christ, am joined in communion with your Holiness, that is, with the See of Peter; on this rock, I know, the Church is built." St. Augustine (A. D. 400) calls upon the Donatist schismatics to "Number up the Bishops from the very See of Peter, and in that order of Fathers see who succeeded to whom; this (the See of Peter) is the rock which the proud gates of hell overcome not." St. Gregory the Great (A. D. 604), the Apostle of England, writes: "Who is ignorant that the holy Church is established on the firmness of the chief of the Apostles? who in his name signified the firmness of his mind, being called Peter, from a rock."

Many of the Fathers do, indeed, understand the rock to mean the confession of Peter, or the faith confessed by Peter. But this interpretation is not in any way opposed to the one given above, viz: that *Peter* was the rock, and the Church was built on him. For the confession of Peter, or the faith confessed by Peter, could not exist without Peter himself: therefore, that the Church was built upon the confession of Peter is the same as saying that it was built on Peter confessing the faith, or on Peter because of his confession of Faith; and that this is the meaning of the Fathers referred to is clear from the fact that none of them exclude Peter, while many of them mention him together with the confession of faith.

prevail against it,* and to thee I will give the keys

Note, however, that Christ Himself is the rock in the *first* place, Peter only in the second place. The Church rests upon Christ chiefly. He is its Founder. He "acquired it with His blood." But as He has allowed others to share in His labours and has given them qualities and names which are strictly speaking His alone—for instance, Christ is the Chief Priest, yet He has made other priests to continue His ministry: He alone has the power of forgiving sins; but He has given to others that same power, to be used in His Name: so He is the chief corner-stone and the one foundation of the Church; but He has allowed others to share in this name and in this relation to the society which He has founded, that they may be the foundation of the Church in a secondary sense and after Him. So St. Paul reminds the Ephesians: "You are fellow-citizens with the saints and the domestics of God, built upon the foundations of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." But though the Church is built upon the Apostles and the Prophets, yet it is in special manner built upon Peter—after Christ *chiefly* upon Peter, for Christ called him, and him alone, not merely a foundation of the Church, but the *rock* of the Church. In this sense writes St. Ambrose (A.D. 340): "Great is the grace of Christ, who bestowed almost all His own names on His disciples. I, said He, am the light of the world, and yet He granted to His disciples the very name in which He exulted by the words, You are the light of the world. Christ is the Rock, but yet He did not deny the grace of this to his disciple, that he should be Peter, because he has from the Rock (Christ) firm constancy, immovable faith."

* THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT. By the "gates of hell" is meant the devil and the wicked angels, and those who side with them and do their work; and these "shall not prevail against the Church." A magnificent promise resting on the word of Truth itself! And what does this promise mean? It means that in spite of the fiercest opposition and persecution the Church shall never be destroyed. More than this; Christ's promise is made not merely to the Church as *a* Church, but to the Church as *His* Church (for there is only one true Church). Later on, on the eve of His Passion, He promised to the pastors of His Church the Spirit of Truth Who should abide with them *for ever* and teach them all truth; and on Ascension Day He told them: "Behold I am with you" (by My assistance and protection) "all days, even to the consummation of the world." Now, if the Church were to fall away from the faith, it would no longer be the Church of Christ, it would no longer be taught by the Spirit of Truth, or have the special assistance and protection of its Divine Founder. Or if it were to become a wicked Church, it could no longer be the Church of Christ and His Spouse—it would have failed, fallen away, and the gates of hell would have conquered it. Therefore the Church can *never* be apostate, or heretic, or depraved. Portions of the Church may indeed fall away, as happened at the time of the so-called "Reformation" in the sixteenth century, but the Church as a whole, will ever be true to its Founder,

of the kingdom of heaven.† And whatsoever thou shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in

unshaken and unconquered by the countless persecutions, apostacies, heresies, schisms, which have been, or may hereafter be, raised up against her by the powers of hell. After nineteen centuries of storm it is still the "city seated upon a hill that cannot be hid;" and why? Because it has been founded upon the firm and immovable rock (Peter) and the gates of hell are not to prevail against it.

By this promise of our Lord the so-called "Reformation" is self-condemned. The motive of the Reformation was grounded (apart from the motives of policy and of gain) on a pretended necessity for reform. It was alleged by the "reformers" that the Church had fallen into idolatry and error, and had need of being reformed. If this were true then the gates of hell would have prevailed against the Church and Christ would not have been faithful to His promise.

† TO THEE WILL I GIVE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Another figure of speech, by which our Lord meant that He would give to Peter the chief power and authority in His Church. Our Lord by saying that He would give to St. Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven meant that He would give him the same authority over the Church, which is Christ's kingdom upon earth, that the master of the house has over his household. Hence Peter is constantly called by the early Christian writers (the Fathers and Doctors of the Church) the "key-bearer," the "door-keeper" of the kingdom of heaven, etc.

St. Cyprian in his letter to Jubaianus, writes: "The Church, which is one, was founded by the voice of the Lord upon one (Peter) who also received the keys thereof." St. Hilary addresses St. Peter thus: "O blessed keeper of the gates of heaven, to whose disposal are delivered the keys of the entrance into eternity; whose judgment on earth is an authority prejudged in heaven." St. Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 363) calls Peter "The prince of the Apostles, and the key-bearer of the kingdom of heaven." St. Chrysostom writes: "He committed to the hands of a mortal man the authority over all things in heaven when He gave him the keys." St. Gregory the Great says: "To all who know the Gospels it is clear, that by the voice of the Lord the care of the whole Church was committed to holy Peter the prince of the Apostles. For to him it is said, 'Peter, dost thou love? Feed My sheep' To him it is said, 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' Behold he receives the keys of the heavenly kingdom, the power of binding and loosing is given to him, and the care and government of the whole Church is committed to him." Our Venerable Bede (A.D. 700) says: "Blessed Peter in a special manner received the keys of the kingdom and the headship of judiciary power, that all believers throughout the world may understand that whoever in any way separate themselves from the unity of his faith and communion can neither be loosed from the chains of their sins nor enter the heavenly kingdom."

heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.”*

Peter is Rebuked by Our Lord.

St. Matthew xvi. 21-23.

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again. And Peter taking Him, began to rebuke Him, saying: “Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee.” Who turning said to Peter: “Go behind Me, Satan,† thou art a scandal unto Me: because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.”

Then Jesus said to His disciples: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”

Peter at the Transfiguration.

St. Matthew xvii. 1-3.

And after six days Jesus taketh unto Him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the

* WHATSOEVER YOU SHALL LOOSE UPON EARTH, ETC. Here again is the same idea conveyed in different words: Peter is made the rock, he is given the power of the keys (to open and shut the gates of the kingdom of heaven,) and the power of loosing and binding, all signifying the supreme power and authority of Peter in ruling the Church. It is very true that our Lord not long afterwards gave to the other Apostles the power of loosing and binding, but the same power is here given in a special manner to Peter alone, and to him alone is the promise made that he should be the foundation of the Church, and have the power of the keys, he alone had his name changed, his new name denoting the office to which he was appointed; all this denoted special privileges and powers granted to Peter above those given to the other Apostles—he was the first and the chief, and they were subject to him. So St. Basil speaks of Peter as, “That blessed Peter who was preferred before all the disciples: who alone received a greater testimony and blessing than the rest, he to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven were entrusted.” St. Optatus writes: “For the good of unity, blessed Peter both merited to be preferred before all the Apostles, and he alone received the keys of the kingdom of heaven that he might communicate them to others,” and Tertullian: “If thou thinkest heaven is closed, remember that the Lord left here the key thereof to Peter, *and through him* to the Church.”

† GO BEHIND ME, SATAN. St. Jerome says that St. Peter is here called Satan, an adversary, because he was so at that moment, when, out of human affection, he opposed Christ, Who desired to suffer and be crucified; but that he was appointed to

sun: and His garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with Him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: “Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles,‡ one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.”

And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo a voice out of the cloud, saying: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him.” And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them: and said to them: “Arise, and fear not.” And they lifting up their eyes, saw no one, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: “Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead.”

The Payment of the Tribute-money.

St. Matthew, xvii. 23-26.

And when they were come to Capharnaum, they that received the didrachmas§ came to Peter,|| and said to him: “Doth not your master pay the didrachma?” He said: “Yes.”

And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him,¶ saying: “What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? of their own children, or of strangers?” And he said: “Of strangers.” Jesus said to him: “Then the children are free. But that we may not scandalize them, go to the sea, and cast in a hook: and that fish which shall first come up, take: and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater: take that and give it to them for Me and thee.”**

be a Rock in the future, that is, he was to be the foundation and head of the Church after the resurrection of Christ.

‡ LET US MAKE THREE TABERNACLES. St. Mark adds that Peter “knew not what he said, for they were struck with fear.”

§ THE DIDRACHMAS. A didrachma was a tax laid upon every one for the service of the Temple; its value was half a stater, about fifteen pence in English money.

|| CAME TO PETER. Why to Peter? St. Chrysostom says, “As Peter seemed to be the first of the disciples they go to him.”

¶ JESUS PREVENTED HIM. Our Lord knowing what had taken place, and that Peter was about to speak to Him of the tribute-money, forestalled him, and Himself brought up the subject before Peter had time to speak of it.

** FOR ME AND FOR THEE. Christ had just declared that being the Son of God by nature, not by adoption, He was free from

The Disciples' Dispute for Precedence.

St. Matthew xviii. 1-3.

At that hour* the disciples came to Jesus, saying: "Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?" And Jesus, calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: "Amen I say unto you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven."

Peter's Question on the Forgiveness of Injuries.

St. Matthew xviii. 21, 22.

Then came Peter unto Him and said: "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus saith to him: "I say not to thee till seven times; but till seventy times seven times."

The Barren Fig-tree.

St. Mark xi. 11-14; 19-24.

And He entered into Jerusalem, into the Temple: and having viewed all things round about, when now the eventide was come, He went out to Bethania with the twelve. And the next day when

the tribute paid to His Eternal Father; now, being willing to pay the tribute, He associates Peter with Himself, and by His miraculous power provides one coin to pay for both. "You see the greatness of the honor," exclaims St. Chrysostom: "in reward for his faith He connected him (Peter) with Himself in the payment of the tribute." And speaking of Peter's humility the holy writer continues, "Mark, the disciple of Peter, seems not to have recorded this incident, because it pointed out the great honour bestowed on him; but he did record his denial, while he was silent as to the points which made him conspicuous, his master perhaps begging him not to say great things about him."

* AT THAT HOUR. The dispute among the disciples as to which of them should be the greater seems to have arisen almost immediately after, and in consequence of, the honour paid to St. Peter: St. Mark, indeed says that "when they were in the house, he asked them: what did you treat of in the way? But they held their peace, for in the way they had disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest." Cornelius à Lapide, following St. Chrysostom and others, states that the Apostles frequently had this contention among themselves on account of the preference shown sometimes to Peter alone, sometimes to Peter, James, and John; but the immediate occasion of the present dispute was that they saw Peter treated with special favour, inasmuch as Christ had paid the didrachma for him alone.

they came out from Bethania, He was hungry. And when He had seen afar off a fig-tree having leaves, He came if perhaps He might find anything on it. And when He was come to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the time for figs. And answering He said to it: "May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more for ever." And His disciples heard it.

And when evening was come, He went forth out of the city. And when they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter remembering, said to Him: "Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which Thou didst curse is withered away." And Jesus answering, saith to them: "Have the faith of God. Amen I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, 'Be thou removed and be cast into the sea,' and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatsoever he saith shall be done, it shall be done unto him. Therefore, I say unto you, all things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you."

Peter is Sent to Prepare the Pasch.

St. Luke xxii. 7-16.

And the day of the unleavened bread came, on which it was necessary that the pasch should be killed. And He sent Peter and John,† saying: "Go and prepare for us the pasch, that we may eat." But they said: "Where wilt Thou that we prepare?" And He said to them: "Behold, as you go into the city, there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in. And you shall say to the good man of the house: 'The Master saith to thee: Where is the guest-chamber, where I may eat the pasch with My disciples?' And he will show you a large dining-room furnished: and there prepare." And they going, found as He said to them, and made ready the pasch.

And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said to them: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer: for I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

† HE SENT PETER AND JOHN. Peter, the one who had been appointed the chief, John, the beloved disciple.

The Washing of the Feet.

St. John xiii. 3-11; 21-26.

[Jesus], knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and goeth to God, He riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments, and having taken a towel girded Himself. After that he putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. He cometh therefore to Simon Peter.* And Peter said to Him: "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to Him: "What I do thou knowest not now,† but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter said to Him: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus answered him: "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me." Simon Peter saith to Him: "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." Jesus saith to him: "He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean, but not all." For He knew who he was that would betray Him; therefore He said: "You are not all clean. . . ."

When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit: and He testified, and said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you shall betray Me." The disciples therefore looked one upon another, doubting of whom He spoke. Now there was leaning on Jesus's bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: "Who is it of whom He speaketh?" He therefore leaning on the

* HE COMETH THEREFORE TO SIMON PETER. Cornelius à Lapide, the great commentator on the Holy Scriptures, writes on this text: "He comes to Peter that in the washing, as on other occasions, He may begin with him as the head and chief of the Apostles. For if he had come to the other Apostles first, they would certainly have declined, even as Peter did, so great and so unaccustomed a humiliation [on the part of our Lord]; but when they saw Peter reprov'd by Christ and submitting, they also submitted and suffered their feet to be washed by Christ." A Lapide says that this is the opinion of St. Augustine, the Venerable Bede, and others.

† THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW. The mystery implied by the action of our Lord and not understood by Peter was, first, a lesson of humility and charity to the Apostles, and to all Christians, especially to those in authority; and secondly, a lesson as to the cleanness of heart required of those who approach the Holy Eucharist.

breast of Jesus saith to Him: "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered: "He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped." And when He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

"Lord, Whither Goest Thou?"

St. John xiii. 33-38.

[Jesus said:] "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek Me, and as I said to the Jews: Whither I go, you cannot come: so I say to you now. A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another." Simon Peter saith to Him: "Lord, whither goest Thou?"‡ Jesus answered: "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow hereafter." Peter saith to Him: "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thee." Jesus answered him: "Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me? Amen, amen, I say to thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou deny Me thrice."

Peter, the Confirmer of his Brethren.

St. Luke xxii. 24-32.

And there was also a strife amongst them,§ which of them should seem to be greater. And He said to them: "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and they that have power over them are called beneficent. But you not so: but he that is the greater|| among you, let him become as the

‡ WHITHER GOEST THOU? St. Peter did not understand that our Lord was speaking of His leaving the Apostles by His ascension into Heaven. St. Peter could not follow Him there now, but he could do so hereafter—after his own crucifixion for his Master's sake.

§ THERE WAS ALSO A STRIFE AMONGST THEM. As already stated, there was frequently a contention among the Apostles which of them should be the greatest. On the present occasion it probably arose from the knowledge that their Master was soon to be taken from them, and they contended who should take His place. True, our Lord had already pointed out one, but it must be borne in mind that the Apostles were, up to the present, dull, uneducated, unenlightened by the Holy Ghost, and they had been frequently reprov'd for their want of understanding; and their knowledge, or at least suspicion, of Peter's preference tended to make them jealous, unmindful of our Lord's frequent exhortations to humility.

|| HE THAT IS THE GREATER. The lesson was addressed to

younger: and he that is the leader, as he that serveth. For which is greater, he that sitteth at table or he that serveth? Is it not he that sitteth at table? but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth. And you are they who have continued with Me in My temptations: and I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And the Lord said: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you* that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee,† that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren."

all: all of them were to avoid the overbearing lordship of the kings of the Gentiles. But a special lesson was given to the chief among them—he was to be as the younger and as the servant. Note our Lord's words "He that is the greater . . . he *that is* the leader," therefore there *was* a "greater," there *was* a "leader."

* SATAN HATH DESIRED TO HAVE YOU. The desire of Satan extended to all the Apostles: "to have *you*," "that he may sift *you* as wheat." He desired "to sift them as wheat," to shake them asunder and utterly destroy them as a body, that by so doing he might utterly destroy and bring to ruin the Church which Christ was founding. Our Lord had foreseen this fierce assault of Satan, and had promised that neither this attempt to destroy the Church, nor future attempts, should succeed—the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it*.

† I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE. Satan's attack is directed against *all*: Christ prays for *one*, and by this prayer for one—for Christ's prayer is unfailing, He is heard for the reverence due to Him—Satan is defeated. Now what was Christ's prayer? "That thy faith fail not, and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." Therefore Peter's faith was not to fail, and he was to confirm, that is to strengthen and keep together, even the Apostles. This is a repetition of the promise already made to Peter, viz., that he was to be the firm and immovable foundation on which the Church was to rest, but here it is distinctly stated, that even the pillars of the Church were to be kept firm by Peter.

St. Leo, writing in the fifth century and alluding to this passage, says: "The danger from the temptation of fear was common to all the Apostles, and all equally needed the Divine protection, since the devil desired to dismay all, to crush all; and yet a special care of Peter is undertaken by our Lord, and He prays especially for the faith of Peter, as if the state of the rest would be more sure if the mind of their chief were not conquered. In Peter therefore, the fortitude of all is protected, and the help of Divine grace is so ordered, that the firmness which through Christ is given to Peter, is conferred through Peter on the Apostles."

Peter's Presumption.

St. Matthew xxvi. 31-35.

Then Jesus saith to them: "And you shall be scandalized in Me this night. For it is written: *I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed*. But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." And Peter answering said to Him: "Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized." Jesus said to him: "Amen, I say to thee, that in this night, before the cock crow, thou wilt deny Me thrice." Peter saith to Him: "Yea, though I should die with Thee,‡ I will not deny Thee." And in like manner said all the disciples.

Peter at Gethsemani.

St. Matthew xxvi. 36-50. St. John xviii. 10-12.

(*St. Matthew.*) Then Jesus came with them into a country place which is called Gethsemani. And He said to His disciples: "Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray." And taking with Him Peter § and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad. Then He saith to them: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here and watch with Me." And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying, and saying: "My father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

And He cometh to His disciples, and findeth them asleep, and He saith to Peter: || "What? Could

St. Ambrose also writes to the same effect: "Peter, after being tempted by the devil, is set over the Church. The Lord therefore signified beforehand what that is, that He afterwards chose him to be Pastor of the Lord's flock. For to him He said, 'But thou, when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren.'"

‡ YEA, THOUGH I SHOULD DIE WITH THEE. St. Mark adds that after our Lord's warning, Peter "spoke the more vehemently." Peter committed herein a threefold sin—he persistently contradicted his divine Master, he preferred himself to the other Apostles, and he presumed upon his own strength.

§ TAKING WITH HIM PETER. Eight of the Apostles were left at the gate of the garden; the three privileged ones, Peter, and James and John (the two sons of Zebedee), were taken some distance into the garden, where they were stationed to watch and pray, our Lord Himself going a little further on.

|| HE SAITH TO PETER. Though speaking to Peter alone, He addressed him in the plural number "Could *you* not watch?" Because, as the members are praised or blamed in their head, so in reproving Peter, He was reproving all.

you not watch one hour with Me? Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak." Again the second time, He went and prayed, saying: "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done." And He cometh again, and findeth them sleeping: for their eyes were heavy. And leaving them He went again: and He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word. Then He cometh to His disciples, and saith to them: "Sleep ye now and take your rest: behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise let us go; behold he is at hand that will betray Me."

As He yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people. And he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying: "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He; hold Him fast." And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said: "Hail, Rabbi." And he kissed Him. And Jesus said to him: "Friend, whereto art thou come?" Then they came up, and laid hands on Jesus, and held Him.

(*St. John.*) Then Simon Peter having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear: and the name of the servant was Malchus. Jesus therefore said to Peter: "Put up thy sword into the scabbard: the chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" Then the band and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound Him.

Peter's Fall.

St. John xviii. 13-16. St. Mark xiv. 66-72.

(*St. John.*) And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the high-priest of that year. Now Caiphas was he who had given the counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple.* And that disciple was known to the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the high-priest.

But Peter stood at the door without. The other disciple therefore who was known to the high-priest, went out, and spoke to the portress and brought in

Peter. The maid, therefore that was portress, saith to Peter: "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" He saith: "I am not." Now the servants and ministers stood at a fire of coals, because it was cold, and warmed themselves. And with them was Peter also standing, and warming himself.

(*St. Mark.*) Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh one of the maid-servants† of the high-priest: and when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him she saith: "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." But he denied, saying: "I neither know nor understand what thou sayest." And he went forth before the court; and the cock crew. And again a maid-servant seeing him, began to say to the standers by: "This is one of them." But he denied again. And after a while they that stood by said again to Peter: "Surely thou art one of them; for thou art also a Galilean." But he began to curse and to swear, saying: "I know not this man of whom you speak."

(*St. Luke.*) And the Lord turning, looked on Peter.‡ And Peter remembered the word of the

† ONE OF THE MAID-SERVANTS. According to St. John it was "the maid that was portress" who first taxed Peter with being one of our Lord's disciples. Probably as she was letting him in, not seeing him clearly as it was dark, she asked him, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" He said: "I am not." Then, soon after, as Peter was sitting by the fire with the servants, this same portress came, and looking at him earnestly by the light of the fire, spoke of him to another maid-servant, and perhaps to one or two of the bystanders, and they repeated the question, Peter again denying. Then, after about an hour's interval, "one of the servants of the high-priest (a kinsman to him whose ear Peter cut off) saith to him, Did I not see thee in the garden with him?" And on Peter's denying the bystanders took it up: "Thou art also a Galilean; even thy speech doth discover thee." Peter began to curse and to swear in his denial, and then the cock crew the second time—at day-break.

‡ THE LORD TURNING LOOKED ON PETER. Possibly at that moment our Lord was being conveyed from the hall of the high priest, the examination being over, to some other portion of the house where he was to remain till morning, and passing within view of Peter cast upon him His heart-searching glance: and Peter, coming to himself, going out, wept bitterly. Peter's bitter sorrow at the fault he had committed was accompanied by hope in God's mercy, and we know that he was pardoned; Judas also repented of his crime, but he despaired and was lost.

What was Peter's sin in denying his Lord? Was it a sin against faith? Rather it was a sin against the outward profession of faith. There was faith in his heart, he still believed in his

* ANOTHER DISCIPLE. This other disciple was St. John.

Lord, as He had said: "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice." And Peter going out wept bitterly.

Easter Day and St. Peter.

St. Mark xvi. 1-8. St. John xx. 2-9.

When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, brought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: "Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" And looking they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. Who saith to them: "Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified: He is risen, He is not here, behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter,* that He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him, as He told you." But they going out, fled from the sepulchre. For a trembling and fear had seized

Master and loved him, or why should he have followed Him into so dangerous a place? but he was lacking in moral courage (in spite of, or because of, his presumption at the supper) and so he was afraid to own Him. This fall of Peter is not unfrequently brought up as an argument against both the supremacy and the infallibility of St. Peter. The objectors say St. Peter denied his Master three times; how could he then be head of the Church or infallible? Such people confuse supremacy and infallibility with impeccability or sinlessness: but that St. Peter was impeccable or sinless is no part of Catholic teaching. Neither did his sin, such as it was, in any way concern his office; it was a private, individual act, not an official act.

Hence our reply to the objection is, that infallibility is not sinlessness; that Peter's sin was not a falling away from the faith, but from the outward profession of faith; and, whatever his fault was, it was not a public official act: whereas Catholics hold that St. Peter, and his successors the Bishops of Rome, are infallible, not in their private capacity, but only when as head of the Church, they define a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church. It is further to be observed, that St. Peter at the time of his fall was not yet head of the Church and he was therefore not infallible. He had received the promise of the office but was not yet appointed because our Lord Himself was still the visible head.

* TELL HIS DISCIPLES AND PETER. The Angel makes a distinct mention of Peter as a mark of honour.

them: and they said nothing to any man; for they were afraid.

(*St. John.*) Mary Magdalen ran therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith to them: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying: but yet he went not in.† Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that had been about His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre: and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture,‡ that He must rise again from the dead.

Peter Made Shepherd of the Flock of Christ. Peter's Question Concerning John.

St. John xxi. 1-23.

After this Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias: and He showed

† HE WENT NOT IN. St. John being younger and more active got to the sepulchre first. He did not go in, but, contenting himself with stooping down and looking inside, he waited till St. Peter came up, giving him the precedence on so important an occasion. St. Peter, on arriving, at once went in.

‡ THEY UNDERSTOOD NOT THE SCRIPTURE. Although our Lord had frequently reminded them of the prophecies concerning Himself that He should be put to death and should rise again, yet they had not laid these truths to heart.

St. Paul in relating the appearances of the risen Saviour to the Apostles and others of the faithful, says, first, "that He was seen by Cephas." This implies a distinct manifestation of our Lord to Peter before He appeared to the other disciples. And that this actually took place is clear from the passage in the Gospel of St. Luke, which tells us how the two disciples, to whom our Lord had appeared at Emmaus, on their return to Jerusalem, "found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying, 'The Lord hath risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.'" And it is noticeable that while the word of these two disciples—who, as it would seem, told those of the faithful whom they met on the way from Emmaus to Jerusalem what they had seen—and of Mary Magdalen and the holy women, is not received, yet on Peter's word they say, "The Lord is risen indeed."

Himself after this manner. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas who is called Didymus, and Nathanael who was of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter saith to them: "I go a-fishing." They say to him: "We also come with thee."* And they went forth and entered into the ship: and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus therefore said to them: "Children, have you any meat?" They answered Him: "No." He saith to them: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship; and you shall find." They cast therefore: and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved, said to Peter: "It is the Lord." Simon Peter, when he heard that it was the Lord, girt his coat about him (for he was naked) and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the ship (for they were not far from the land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith to them: "Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught." Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land,† full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three: and although there were so many, the net was not broken.

Jesus saith to them: "Come, and dine." And none of them who were at meat durst ask Him: "Who art Thou?" knowing that it was the Lord. And Jesus cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish in like manner. This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to His disciples, after He was risen from the dead.

When therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to

* I GO A-FISHING. As our Lord was no longer with them continuously and no special work had been enjoined to them, these Apostles returned to their former occupation.

† SIMON PETER WENT UP INTO THE BOAT AND DREW THE NET. Cornelius à Lapide, commenting on this text, says that throughout this fishing the primacy of Peter is suggested: Peter is the first to call the others to the fishing; he is the first to come to Christ on the shore; he draws the net to land, that thereby might be signified that all the faithful are to be brought to Christ, and governed by him.

Simon Peter:‡ "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?"§ He saith to Him: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." He saith to him: "Feed My lambs."|| He saith to him

‡ JESUS SAITH TO SIMON PETER. Our Lord now addresses Himself to Peter alone. Twice He had promised Peter that he was to have a special relation to the Church, by being made its head and chief ruler. Now He fulfils His promise. This promise had not yet been fulfilled, because Christ Himself was the visible Head and Ruler of the Church; but now He was about to leave this earth, and, as a visible body requires a visible head, He appoints Peter to take His place.

§ LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE? Note the expression "more than these"—even more than the other apostles. More love was asked for from Peter because the charge committed to him was so great.

|| FEED MY LAMBS; FEED MY SHEEP. Under the figure of a shepherd feeding his sheep, our Lord makes St. Peter the ruler of the Church—gives him authority over all the faithful. We speak of the pastor of a diocese or of a parish, and thereby we mean the one who has spiritual authority, who is the ruler of a diocese or parish. When our Lord spoke of Himself as the Good Shepherd, when He said that there was to be "one fold and one Shepherd," the idea conveyed to us is connected with headship, authority and submission to authority.

In the first and second exhortation of our Lord to St. Peter, "Feed my lambs, . . . feed my lambs," the Greek word—and it must be borne in mind that St. John's Gospel was written originally in Greek—is *boske*, which means simply *feed* or *pasture*, and thereby St. Peter was exhorted to guide and teach the faithful. But in the third exhortation "feed my sheep" a different word is used—*poimaine*—which means *rule*. The same word is used in Psalm ii. in which the Eternal Father is represented as saying to Christ, "Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron;" and of Bethlehem it was prophesied: "Out of thee shall come forth the leader who shall rule My people Israel." St. Paul again uses the same word when he tells the Bishops of Ephesus that they have been placed by the Holy Ghost "to rule the Church of God." And St. Peter exhorts the Bishops to "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it not by constraint, but willingly as of God." In all these passages the Greek versions have the word *poimainein*—to rule.

St. Peter, therefore, was appointed to be Shepherd over, that is to guide and to rule, the flock of Christ, which is the Church. And see how widely his authority extends: "Feed My lambs; feed My sheep," our Lord tells him. Who are the lambs and sheep of Christ? Surely, all true believers, all true followers of Christ, all Christians. Nor is any exception made: high and low, lay and cleric, Bishops and even Apostles are of the flock of Christ, *all* are committed to Peter's care. The bishop is pastor over all in his diocese; Peter is pastor over the whole Church.

Hear what some of the Fathers say on the commission given to St. Peter:

again: "Simon son of John, lovest thou Me?" He saith to Him: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." He saith to him: "Feed My lambs." He said to him the third time: "Simon

St. Ambrose: "As He (Christ) is about to be raised up into heaven He is leaving him (Peter) to us, as it were the vicar of His love. For thus you have it: 'Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? . . . Feed My sheep. . . .' Because he alone out of all makes this profession (of love) he is preferred before all . . . and now he is not ordered as at first, to *feed the lambs*, but His sheep, that the more perfect might govern the more perfect."

St. Chrysostom: "Why then passing by the others does He converse with Peter on those things? He was the chosen one of the Apostles, the mouth of the disciples, the leader of the choir. On this account Paul also went up on a certain occasion to see him rather than the others. And also, to show him that he must have confidence, as the denial was done away with, *He puts into his hands the presidency over his brethren*. And He brings not forward that denial, neither does He reproach him with the past, but says to him, 'if thou love Me, rule over the brethren.' And the third time He gives him the same injunction, showing at what a price He sets the presidency over His own sheep, and if any one should say, how then did James receive the throne [episcopal see] of Jerusalem?—we would answer that he appointed the former (Peter) teacher not of that throne, but of the world." Again: "Why, then did He shed His blood? That He might possess those sheep which He entrusted to Peter and to those after him."

St. Augustine, giving his reasons for being a Catholic, says: "The agreement of peoples and nations keeps me (in the bosom of the Catholic Church); an authority begun with miracles, nourished with hope, increased with charity, strengthened with antiquity, keeps me; the succession of bishops from the Chair itself of Peter, to whom the Lord after His Resurrection committed His sheep to be fed, down even to the present Bishop, keeps me." And in another place: "Justly, after His Resurrection, the Lord commended to Peter himself, His sheep to be fed. For not he alone among the disciples merited to feed the Lord's sheep; but when Christ speaks to one, unity is commended, and to Peter chiefly, because among the Apostles Peter is the first."

St. Leo: "To the blessed Apostle Peter, above the others, after the keys of the kingdom had been given, is the care of the Lord's fold committed." And: "Whereas Peter alone received many things, nothing passed unto any one (else) without his participation in it. Out of the whole world the one Peter is chosen to be set over both the calling of the nations, and over all the Apostles, and all the fathers of the Church; that although in the people of God, there be many priests and many shepherds, Peter may rule all, whom Christ also rules by supreme headship."

St. Gregory: "To all who know the Gospel it is clear that by the voice of the Lord the care of the whole Church was committed to holy Peter, prince of all the Apostles, for to him it is said, 'Peter lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep.'"

son of John, lovest thou Me?" Peter was grieved, because He had said to him the third time, "Lovest thou Me?" And he said to Him: "Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee." He said to him: "Feed My sheep. Amen, amen, I say to thee: when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not." And this He said, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had said this, He saith to him: "Follow me." Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on His breast at supper, and said: "Lord, who is he that shall betray Thee?" Him therefore when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus saith to him: "So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? follow thou Me."

This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: he should not die; but, "So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee?"

II. ST. PETER IN THE ACTS.*

The Election of Matthias.

Acts i. 12-26.

They returned to Jerusalem, from the mount that is called Olivet, which is nigh Jerusalem, within a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James of Alphaeus and Simon Zelotes, and Jude the brother of James. All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.

* The "Acts of the Apostles" is a narrative, incomplete it is true, but still in some particulars very full, of the history of the Church for a period of about thirty years from the Ascension of our Lord. The Acts may be divided into two parts: the first part consisting of the first twelve chapters, relates the history of the Church during the first ten years of its existence; the second part is entirely occupied with the missionary labours of St. Paul, St. Luke, the inspired writer of the Acts, having been St. Paul's constant companion throughout his journeys. As in the Gospels

In those days Peter rising up in the midst of the brethren,* said: (now the number of persons together was about an hundred and twenty,) "Men, brethren, the Scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was the leader of them that apprehended Jesus: who was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. And he indeed hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity, and being hanged, burst asunder in the midst: and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: so that the same field was called in their tongue *Haceldama*, that is to say, 'The field of blood.' For it is written in the book of Psalms: 'Let their habitation become desolate, and let there be none to dwell therein. And his bishopric let another take.' Wherefore of these men who have accompanied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out amongst us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day wherein He was taken up from us, one of these must be made a witness with us of His resurrection." And they appointed two, Joseph, called

our Lord is the prominent figure, so in the first part of the Acts it is St. Peter who stands out before any other Apostle. His words, his doings, his miracles are told in detail; of the other Apostles very little is said. In fact this first part of the Acts might well be called a history of St. Peter.

St. Chrysostom points out this prominence of St. Peter: "Behold him making his rounds on every side, and the first to be found; when an Apostle was to be chosen, he was the first; when the Jews were to be told that they were not drunken; when the lame man was to be healed; when the multitude was to be addressed, he is before the rest; when they had to do with the rulers, it is he; when with Ananias, when healings took place from the shadow, still it is he. Where there was danger it is he, and when there was dispensation; but when all is tranquil they act in common. He sought not the greater honour. But, again, when miracles are to be worked, he comes forth before the rest."

* PETER RISING UP IN THE MIDST OF THE BRETHREN. He is the first to speak, says St. Chrysostom, "both as fervent and as one entrusted by Christ with the flock, and as the first of the choir" (of Apostles). Peter takes the initiative, opens the proceedings, tells the company what they are to do, and limits the election to the "men who accompanied with us . . . one of them must be made witness with us of His resurrection." "But might not Peter by himself have elected?" asks St. Chrysostom; "Certainly," he replies, "but he does not, so that he may not seem partial."

Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And praying they said: "Thou, Lord, Who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen, to take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas hath by transgression fallen, that he might go to his own place." And they gave them lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.

St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts ii.

And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were altogether in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.

Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered saying: "Behold, are not all these that speak, Galileans? And how have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

And they were all astonished, and wondered, saying one to another: "What meaneth this?" But others mocking said: "These men are full of new wine." But Peter, standing up with the eleven,†

† PETER STANDING UP WITH THE ELEVEN. The charge, "These men are full of new wine" is made against all the Apostles; it is Peter who comes forward and, in the name of all, refutes it. St. Chrysostom says on this passage: "What means with the eleven? They uttered a common voice and he was the mouthpiece of all. And the eleven stand beside him and bear witness to his words."

lifted up his voice and spoke to them: * "Ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you, and with your ears receive my words: for these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day: but this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall all come to pass, in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And upon My servants indeed and upon My handmaids will I pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood and fire, and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and manifest day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.'

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you also know: This same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that He should be holden by it. For David saith concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord before my face: because He is at my right hand that I may not be moved. For this my heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced; moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope. Because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance.'

"Ye men, brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David; that he died and was buried; and his sepulchre is with us to this present

day. Whereas therefore he was a prophet, and knew that 'God had sworn to him with an oath that of the fruit of his loins one should sit upon his throne;' foreseeing this, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ. For neither was He left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses. Being exalted therefore by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which you see and hear. For David ascended not into heaven; but he himself said: 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool.' Therefore let all the house of Israel know most certainly that God hath made both Lord, and Christ, this same Jesus, Whom you have crucified."

Now when they had heard these things they had compunction in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles: "What shall we do, men and brethren?"† But Peter said to them: "Do penance, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call." And with very many other words did he testify and exhort them, saying: "Save yourselves from this perverse generation." They therefore that received his word were baptised: and there were added in that day about three thousand souls. And they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: many wonders also and signs were done by the Apostles in Jerusalem, and there was great fear in all.

* SPOKE TO THEM. Peter was the first of the Apostles to fulfil the commission given to them *to teach, to be witnesses* to Christ; and here, before an excited crowd, he preaches the necessity of belief in Christ.

† WHAT SHALL WE DO, MEN AND BRETHREN? The Jews make this inquiry of all the Apostles, it is addressed to Peter as representing them. And "here again," St. Chrysostom says, "where all are asked he alone replies." "And here we see how fitting it was that Peter, whom Christ had set as the foundation and rock of the Church, should labor with all his might as the chief architect after Him to build up the structure. But what in the meantime of the other Apostles? Were not they also architects? Yes, but *with* Peter and *under* Peter, whom accordingly they attend and support."

The First Miracle.

Acts iii.

Now Peter and John went up into the Temple, at the ninth hour of prayer. And a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried; whom they laid every day at the gate of the Temple, which is called Beautiful, that he might ask alms of them that went into the Temple. He, when he had seen Peter and John* about to go into the Temple, asked to receive an alms. But Peter with John fastening his eyes upon him said: "Look upon us." But he looked earnestly upon them, hoping that he should receive something of them. But Peter said:† "Silver and gold I have none; but what I have, I give thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise, and walk." And taking him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and went in with them into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they knew him, that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful gate of the Temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him.

And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran to them to the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. But Peter seeing, made answer‡ to the people: "Ye men of Israel, why wonder you at this? or why look you upon us, as if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, Whom you indeed delivered up and denied before the face of Pilate, when he judged He should be released. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. But the author

* PETER AND JOHN. If any of the Apostles were in a higher position than Peter, or even on an equality with him, it would surely be St. John, yet whenever these two are associated in any work of importance, Peter is always mentioned first and takes the precedence.

† PETER SAID. It is Peter who works the miracle, John is silent.

‡ PETER SEEING, MADE ANSWER. Again Peter takes up the word and speaks for himself and John.

of life you killed, Whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And in the faith of His Name, this man, whom you have seen and know, hath His Name strengthened; and the faith which is by Him, hath given this perfect soundness in the sight of you all.

"And now, brethren, I know that you did it through ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. That when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Him Who hath been preached unto you, Jesus Christ, Whom heaven indeed must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets from the beginning of the world. For Moses said: 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me: Him you shall hear according to all things whatsoever He shall speak to you. And it shall be, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.' And all the prophets from Samuel and afterwards, who have spoken have told of these ways. You are the children of the prophets and of the testament which God made to our fathers, saying to Abraham: 'And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.' To you, first, God raising up His Son, hath sent Him to bless you: that every one may convert himself from his wickedness."

Peter and John before the Council.

Acts iv. 1-23.

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the officer of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead: and they laid hands upon them, and put them in hold, till the next day; for it was now evening. But many of them, who had heard the word, believed: and the number of the men was made five thousand.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that their princes, and ancients, and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high-priest,

and Caiphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high-priest. And setting them in the midst, they asked: "By what power, or by what name have you done this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost,* said to them: "Ye princes of the people, and ancients, hear: If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom you crucified, Whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him this man standeth here before you whole. This is *the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner*: neither is there salvation to any other; for there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."

Now seeing the constancy of Peter and of John, understanding that they were illiterate, and ignorant men, they wondered; and they knew them that they had been with Jesus. Seeing the man also who had been healed, standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But they commanded them to go aside out of the council: and they conferred among themselves, saying: "What shall we do to these men? for indeed a known miracle hath been done by them to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: it is manifest, and we cannot deny it. But that it may be no farther spread among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak no more in this Name to any man." And calling them, they charged them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answering, said to them: "If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

But they threatening, sent them away, not finding how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified what had been done, in that which had come to pass. For the man was

above forty years old, in whom that miraculous cure had been wrought. And being let go, they came to their own company, and related all that the chief priests and ancients had said to them.

The Punishment of Ananias and Saphira.

Acts iv. 32-37, v. 1-11.

And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul: neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them. And with great power did the Apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord: and great grace was in them all. For neither was there any one needy among them: for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold, and laid it down before the feet of the Apostles: and distribution was made to every one, according as he had need. And Joseph, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is by interpretation, the son of consolation), a levite, a Cyprian born, having land, sold it, and brought the price, and laid it at the feet of the Apostles.

But a certain man named Ananias, with Saphira his wife, sold a piece of land, and by fraud kept back part of the price of land, his wife being privy thereunto: and bringing a certain part of it, laid it at the feet of the Apostles.

But Peter said: "Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep part of the price of the land? Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God." And Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost. And there came great fear upon all that heard it. And the young men rising up, removed him, and carrying him out, buried him.

And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in. And Peter said† to her: "Tell me,

* PETER FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST. Peter and John were present before the council, it was Peter who was inspired by the Holy Ghost to answer for both. "See," exclaims St. Chrysostom, "how John is on every occasion silent, while Peter defends him likewise."

† PETER SAID. Ananias and Saphira had laid the price of the land "at the feet of the Apostles," but it is Peter who uses the judicial power; he acts as the judge, though the other Apostles are present and sit in judgment with him; he questions Ananias

woman, whether you sold the land for so much?" And she said: "Yea, for so much." And Peter said unto her: "Why have you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them who have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out." Immediately she fell down before his feet, and gave up the ghost. And the young men coming in, found her dead; and carried her out, and buried her by her husband. And there came great fear upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

Peter's Shadow.

Acts v. 12-16.

And by the hands of the Apostles * were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. But of the rest no man durst join himself unto them; but the people magnified them. And the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord was more increased: insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities. And there came also together to Jerusalem a multitude out of the neighbouring cities, bringing sick persons, and such as were troubled with unclean spirits; who were all healed.

and passes sentence upon him, and the sentence has immediate effect, "Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost." So also with Saphira, Peter questions her, convicts her, and passes upon her the same sentence as he passed upon her husband. The conduct of Peter in this matter, acting as he did upon his own initiative, though the other Apostles were present, and inflicting the punishment of death for the violation of ecclesiastical law and the lie to the Holy Ghost, is a strong proof that he had a position of chief and head of the Apostles and that this position was admitted by them.

* BY THE HANDS OF THE APOSTLES. All the Apostles, or at least many of them, took part in the working of signs and wonders; but special mention is made of Peter's miracles, and some of these miracles were of a particular kind, worked even by his shadow passing over the sick in their beds. Peter's superiority over the other Apostles seems to have been well known, for people brought their sick and laid them in Peter's way, that *his* "shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities." They knew his position and his power, and so sought him more than any other of the Apostles.

The Apostles Imprisoned.

Acts v. 17-42.

Then the high-priest rising up, and all they that were with him were filled with envy; and they laid hands on the Apostles, and put them in the common prison. But an Angel of the Lord, by night opening the doors of the prison, and leading them out, said: "Go, and standing, speak in the Temple to the people all the words of this life." Who having heard this, early in the morning entered into the Temple, and taught.

And the high-priest coming, and they that were with him, called together the council, and all the ancients of the children of Israel: and they sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the ministers came, and opening the prison, found them not there, they returned and told, saying: "The prison indeed we found shut with all diligence, and the keepers standing before the doors: but opening it, we found no man within."

Now when the officer of the Temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were in doubt concerning them, what would come to pass. But one came and told them: "Behold, the men whom you put in prison, are in the Temple, standing, and teaching the people." Then went the officer with the ministers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high-priest asked them, saying: "Commanding we commanded you that you should not teach in this name: and behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and you have a mind to bring the blood of this Man upon us." But Peter and the Apostles† answering said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, Whom you put to death, hanging Him upon a tree: Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things, and the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to all that obey Him."

When they had heard these things, they were

† PETER AND THE APOSTLES. Peter acting as spokesman, his defence was theirs as well as his.

cut to the heart, and thought to put them to death. But one in the council rising up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, respected by all the people, commanded the men to be put forth a little while. And he said to them: "Ye men of Israel take heed to yourselves what you intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theodas, affirming himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain, and all that believed him were scattered and brought to nothing. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of enrolling, and drew away the people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as consented to him, were dispersed. And now therefore I say to you, refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God."

And they consented to him. And calling in the Apostles, after they had scourged them, they charged them that they should not speak at all in the Name of Jesus, and they dismissed them. And they indeed went from the presence of the council rejoicing, that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. And every day they ceased not, in the Temple, and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus.

Peter in Samaria.

Acts viii. 5-25.

And Philip, going down to the city of Samaria, preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord were attentive to those things which were said by Philip, hearing, and seeing the miracles which he did. For many of them who had unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, went out; and many taken with the palsy and that were lame, were healed; there was therefore great joy in that city. Now there was a certain man named Simon, who before had been a magician in that city, seducing the people of Samaria, giving out that he was some great one: to whom they all gave ear, from the least to the greatest, saying: "This man is the power of God, which is called great." And they were attentive to him, because for a long

time he had bewitched them with his magical practices. But when they had believed Philip preaching of the kingdom of God, in the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and being baptized, he stuck close to Philip, and being astonished, wondered to see the signs and exceeding great miracles which were done.

Now when the Apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.* Who when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For He was not as yet come upon any of them: but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

And when Simon saw that by the imposition of the hands of the Apostles the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying: "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." But Peter said to him:† "Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter; for thy

* THEY SENT UNTO THEM PETER AND JOHN. Objectors to the primacy of St. Peter bring forward this passage to prove that St. Peter was not the chief of the Apostles. The sender, they say, must be greater than the person sent: as the Apostles sent Peter and John they were therefore their superiors and hence St. Peter was not the head of the Apostles. To this we reply that the sender is not necessarily greater than the person sent: for instance it is written that "God so loved the world as to send His Only-Begotten Son," but the Son is Himself God, equal to the Father, and the Holy Ghost; and of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity our Lord says, "I will send Him from the Father," but the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and to the Son. Again, Saul (Paul) and Barnabas were sent by the Church at Antioch to the work which the Holy Ghost had appointed for them, but St. Paul was at least not inferior to the Church of Antioch. In all these cases the person sent was himself one of the senders and the act of sending was done with his consent and authority. It is as if the ministerial cabinet, or government, were to send the prime minister on a mission of importance; no one would say that, because he was sent, the prime minister was therefore not at the head of the government.

† PETER SAID TO HIM. St. John also was present but Peter takes the lead, and gives the sharp reproof to Simon the magician.

heart is not right in the sight of God. Do penance therefore for this thy wickedness; and pray to God, if perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I see thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity."

Then Simon answering, said: "Pray you for me to the Lord, that none of these things which you have spoken may come upon me."

And they indeed having testified and preached the word of the Lord: returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many countries of the Samaritans.

Peter's Journey of Visitation; his Miracles.

Acts ix. 31-43.

Now the Church had peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and was edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and was filled with the consolation of the Holy Ghost. And it came to pass that Peter, as he passed through visiting all,*

* HE PASSED THROUGH VISITING ALL. St. Peter as chief shepherd made his pastoral visitation everywhere. St. James presided over the Church of Jerusalem, other Apostles had taken their share in planting the faith—why then did Peter make this tour of inspection, "visiting all," if it were not that all were under his care? St. Chrysostom writes, on this text: "Like a general he went round surveying the ranks, seeing what portion was well massed together, what in order, what needed his presence. Behold him making his rounds in every direction."

Again St. Luke enters into detail in relating the miracles of St. Peter, though he tells us little or nothing of the miracles worked by the other Apostles. In like manner in the Gospels the miracles of our Lord are fully described, while those of His disciples are only spoken of in a general way. Our Lord is the prominent figure in the Gospels, St. Peter is the prominent figure in the Acts. Again note the similarity of St. Peter's miracles to those of our Lord. One instance has already been given; in this chapter the healing of Eneas reminds us of the healing of the man sick of the palsy, and the raising of Dorcas bears a very close resemblance to the raising of the daughter of Jairus.

Peter had been the first to preach to the Jews and to procure their admission into the Church. He was now to do the same for the Gentiles. But in order to understand the importance of this step, it must be borne in mind that the Jews looked upon themselves as the chosen people of God—as indeed they were up to the time of the promulgation of the Gospel—and considered that they alone were the possessors of the special favours of God. Consequently they held the Gentiles—those who were not Jews—in aversion, and would not associate with them or even eat with them. When this very strong feeling on the part of the Jews against the Gentiles is considered, it will be seen that

came to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. And he found there a certain man named Eneas, who had kept his bed for eight years, who was ill of the palsy. And Peter said to him: "Eneas, the Lord Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed." And immediately he arose. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him: who were converted to the Lord.

And in Joppe there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days that she was sick and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppe, the disciples hearing that Peter was there, sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not be slack to come unto them. And Peter rising up went with them.

And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood about him weeping, and showing him the coats and garments which Dorcas made them. And they all being put forth, Peter, kneeling down, prayed, and turning to the body, he said: "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes; and seeing Peter, she sat up: and giving her his hand, he lifted her up. And when he had called the saints and the widows, he presented her alive. And it was made known throughout all Joppe; and many believed in the Lord. And it came to pass that he abode many days in Joppe, with one Simon a tanner.

Peter Admits the First Gentiles into the Church.

Acts x., xi.

And there was a certain man in Cesarea, named Cornelius, a centurion of that which is called the Italian band, a religious man, and fearing God with all his house, giving much alms to the people, and always praying to God. This man saw in a vision manifestly, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him: "Cornelius." And he beholding him, being seized with fear, said: "What is it, Lord?" And

Peter's reception of Cornelius and his family into the Church was an act of the highest importance. Yet Peter received them on his own responsibility, acting indeed under a Divine inspiration, and without waiting to consult even the other Apostles.

he said to him: "Thy prayers and thy alms are ascended for a memorial in the sight of God. And now send men to Joppe, and call hither one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he will tell thee what thou must do." And when the angel who spoke to him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a soldier who feared the Lord, of them that were under him: to whom when he had related all, he sent them to Joppe.

And on the next day whilst they were going on their journey, and drawing nigh to the city, Peter went up to the higher parts of the house to pray, about the sixth hour. And being hungry, he was desirous to taste somewhat. And as they were preparing, there came upon him an ecstasy of mind: and he saw the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great linen sheet* let down by the four corners from heaven to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him: "Arise, Peter, kill and eat." But Peter said: "Far be it from me; for I never did eat anything that is common and unclean." And the voice spoke to him again the second time: "That which God hath cleansed,† do not thou call common." And this was done thrice: and presently the vessel was taken up into heaven.

Now whilst Peter was doubting within himself, what the vision that he had seen should mean: behold the men who were sent from Cornelius, inquiring for Simon's house, stood at the gate.

* A GREAT LINEN SHEET. In this vision the great linen sheet signified the Christian Church. "The four-footed beasts, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air" represented human beings,—the "clean" creatures representing the Jews, the "unclean," or "common," representing the Gentiles.

† THAT WHICH GOD HATH CLEANSSED. God was now about to call the Gentiles to the knowledge of Himself, and to be partners with the Jews in the blessings offered through the Incarnation and the Redemption. Hitherto the Jews had been the "chosen nation," God's "peculiar people;" and the Gentiles had been looked upon as outcast and unclean. Now the Gentiles were to be called into the Church, and the prophecy of Malachy was to be fulfilled: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, My Name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My Name a clean oblation, for My Name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts."

And when they had called, they asked if Simon, who is surnamed Peter, were lodged there? And as Peter was thinking of the vision, the Spirit said to him: "Behold, three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." Then Peter going down to the men, said: "Behold I am he whom you seek; what is the cause for which you are come?" Who said: "Cornelius, a centurion, a just man and one that feareth God, and having good testimony from all the nation of the Jews, received an answer of an holy angel, to send for thee into his house and to hear words of thee." Then bringing them in, he lodged them.

And the day following he arose and went with them: and some of the brethren from Joppe accompanied him. And the morrow after he entered into Cesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, having called together his kinsmen and special friends. And it came to pass that when Peter was come in, Cornelius came to meet him, and falling at his feet adored. But Peter lifted him up, saying: "Arise, I myself also am a man." And talking with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said to them: "You know how abominable it is for a man that is a Jew,‡ to keep company or to come unto one of another nation: but God hath showed to me to call no man common or unclean. For which cause, making no doubt, I came when I was sent for: I ask therefore, for what cause you have sent for me?" And Cornelius said: "Four days ago, unto this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold a man stood before me in white apparel, and said: 'Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thy alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppe, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner by the seaside.' Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast done well in coming. Now therefore all we are present in thy sight, to hear all things whatsoever are commanded thee by the Lord."

‡ HOW ABOMINABLE IT IS FOR A MAN THAT IS A JEW. St. Peter here draws attention to the violent prejudice of the Jews against the Gentiles. They would not associate with them, much less would they communicate with them in matters of religion.

And Peter opening his mouth, said: "In very deed I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh justice, is acceptable to him. God sent the word to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all.) You know the word which hath been published through all Judea: for it began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, Jesus of Nazareth: how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, and with power, Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things that He did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; Whom they killed, hanging Him upon a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses pre-ordained by God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He arose again from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He Who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead. To Him all the prophets give testimony, that by His name all receive remission of sins, who believe in Him."

While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And the faithful of the circumcision, who came with Peter, were astonished, for that the grace of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God.

Then Peter answered: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they desired him to tarry with them some days.

And the Apostles and brethren, who were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying: "Why didst thou go in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them?" But Peter began and declared to them * the matter

in order, saying: "I was in the city of Joppe praying, and I saw in an ecstasy of mind a vision—a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners, and it came even unto me. Into which looking I considered, and saw four-footed creatures of the earth, and beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air: And I heard also a voice saying to me: 'Arise, Peter, kill and eat.' And I said: 'Not so, Lord; for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth.' And the voice answered again from heaven; 'What God hath made clean, do not thou call common.' And this was done three times: and all were taken up again to heaven. And behold immediately there were three men come to the house wherein I was, sent to me from Cesarea. And the Spirit said to me that I should go with them, nothing doubting. And these six brethren went with me also: and we entered into the man's house. And he told us, how he had seen an angel in his house, standing and saying to him: 'Send to Joppe, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter, who shall speak to thee words whereby thou shalt be saved, and all thy house.' And when I had begun to speak, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, as upon us also in the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that He said: 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.' If then God gave them the same grace, as to us also who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ: who was I, that could withstand God?"

Having heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying: "God then hath also to the Gentiles given repentance unto life."

St. Peter might have answered the complaint of the Jewish Christians by an appeal to his authority, yet he chose to give an explanation of his conduct and win them by reasoning. St. Chrysostom says: "See how he defends himself and will not use his dignity as the Teacher, for he knew that the more gently he spoke with them, the surer he was to win them." St. Gregory writes: "If when blamed by the faithful, he had considered the authority which he held in holy Church, he might have answered that the sheep entrusted to the shepherd should not venture to censure him. But if, in the complaint of the faithful, he had said anything of his own power, he would not have been the teacher of meekness."

* PETER BEGAN AND DECLARED UNTO THEM. St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory the Great draw attention to the fact that

St. Peter's Imprisonment and Deliverance.

Acts xii. 1-19.

At the same time Herod the king stretched forth his hands, to afflict some of the Church: and he killed James the brother of John* with the sword. And seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take up Peter also. Now it was in the days of the azymes. And when he had apprehended him, he cast him into prison, delivering him to four files of soldiers to be kept, intending after the Pasch to bring him forth to the people.

Peter therefore was kept in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing† by the Church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by him: and a light shined in the room: and he striking Peter on the side raised him up, saying: "Arise quickly." And the chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said to him: "Gird thyself, and put on thy sandals." And he did so. And he said to him: "Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me." And going out he followed him, and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel: but thought he saw a vision. And passing through the first and second ward, they came to the iron gate that leadeth to the city, which of itself opened to them. And going out, they passed on through one street: and immediately the angel departed from him. And Peter coming to himself, said: "Now I know in very deed that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath

* HE KILLED JAMES THE BROTHER OF JOHN. This important event, the martyrdom of the first of the Apostles who shed his blood for Christ, is passed over by St. Luke in a few words. On the other hand the greater part of the chapter is devoted to the imprisonment and escape of St. Peter. This shows that the latter event was of greater importance to the Church, and therefore more worthy of a detailed record, because of the higher position of the person whose life was in danger.

† PRAYER WAS MADE WITHOUT CEASING. We do not read that when St. James was imprisoned that prayer was made without ceasing by the Church for him, though we cannot doubt that he was prayed for, nor is there any record of general prayer being made for St. Paul when he was arrested. As Mr. Allies rightly says, "James and Paul were most distinguished members, but Peter was more. This was an honour reserved to the head alone, as the life of the head was peculiarly precious to the whole body."

delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." And considering, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where many were gathered together and praying.

And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, whose name was Rhode. And as soon as she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but running in she told that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her: "Thou art mad." But she affirmed that it was so. Then said they: "It is his angel."

But Peter continued knocking. And when they had opened, they saw him, and were astonished. But he, beckoning to them with his hand to hold their peace, told how the Lord had brought him out of prison, and he said: "Tell these things to James and to the brethren." And going out he went into another place.

Now when day was come, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, having examined the keepers, he commanded they should be put to death: and going down from Judea to Cesarea, he abode there.

The First General Council.

Acts xv. 1-30.

And some coming down from Judea, taught the brethren: That except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses,‡ you cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small contest with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of the other side, should go up to the Apostles and priests to Jerusalem, about this question. They therefore being brought on their way by the Church, passed through Phenice and Samaria, relating the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received by the Church and by the Apostles and ancients, declaring how great things God had done with them: but there arose some of the sect of the Pharisees that believed, saying: "They must be circumcised, and be commanded to observe the law

‡ AFTER THE MANNER OF MOSES. The question was whether or not the Gentile converts were bound to be circumcised, and to observe the other precepts peculiar to the law of Moses.

of Moses." And the Apostles and ancients assembled to consider this matter.

And when there had been much disputing,* Peter, rising up, said to them: "Men, brethren, you know that in former days God made choice among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel,† and believe. And God, Who knoweth the hearts, gave testimony, giving unto them the Holy Ghost as well as to us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we believe to be saved, in like manner as they also."

And all the multitude held their peace‡ and they heard Barnabas and Paul telling what great signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying: "Men brethren, hear me. Simon hath related how God first visited to take of the Gentiles a people of his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written: 'After these things I will return, and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and the ruins thereof I will rebuild, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord and all nations upon whom My Name is invoked, saith the Lord Who doth these things.' To the Lord was His own work known from the beginning of

the world. For which cause I judge§ that they, who from among the Gentiles are converted to God, are not to be disquieted. But that we write unto them that they refrain themselves from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him in the synagogues, where he is read every sabbath."

Then it pleased the Apostles and ancients with the whole Church to choose men of their own company, and to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas, who was surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren, writing by their hands. "The Apostles and ancients brethren, to the brethren of the Gentiles that are at Antioch and in Syria and Cilicia greeting. Forasmuch as we have heard that some going out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, to whom we gave no commandment: it hath seemed good to us, being assembled together, to choose out men, and to send them unto you with our well-

§ I JUDGE (or *my sentence is*). The Greek word for this is *krino*, but neither the Greek verb nor the English necessarily imply a judicial sentence. When we say that *we judge* a thing to be this or that, we may mean that *in our opinion* it is so. And it would seem from the context that this was the meaning of St. James's words—in his opinion the converted Gentiles were not to be disquieted. But St. James and all the Apostles and elders present had a right to give their vote, and the decree was issued in the name of all: "It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." In every deliberative assembly each member has the right not only of expressing his opinion, but also of voting, and the act or decision, or decree, is that of the whole body. Nor are the rights of the members in any way in opposition to the authority of the head. A government, a parliament, a council, convocation, has its head vested with fitting authority, each member is however free to give his opinion and to vote for or against a measure.

Tertullian, a writer of the second century, speaking of Peter's action in this Council of Jerusalem, says: "In that discussion as to maintaining the law, Peter, first of all, instinct with the Spirit, and prelude with the vocation of the Gentiles, says, 'And now why tempt ye the Lord, by imposing a yoke on the brethren which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? But by the grace of Christ we believe that we shall be saved, as also they.' This sentence both loosed what was given up of the law, and kept binding what was reserved." St. Jerome writes that Peter "used his accustomed freedom and the Apostle James followed his sentence; all the ancients at once agreed to it, and the decree was drawn up upon his wording."

* WHEN THERE HAD BEEN MUCH DISPUTING. "See," says St. Chrysostom, "he first permits a discussion to arise and then he speaks."

† THAT BY MY MOUTH THE GENTILES SHOULD HEAR THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL. St. Peter rising up in the midst of the controversy appealed in settlement of the question, to his own conduct under Divine inspiration, as though this were sufficient to decide the question. Moreover, "God gave testimony, giving to them the Holy Ghost," thus giving His approval to the admission of the Gentiles into the Church. St. Peter continues with a stern reproof, much in the same terms as those in which he spoke to Ananias and Saphira: "Now, therefore, why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples."

‡ ALL THE MULTITUDE HELD THEIR PEACE. There had been "much disputing" before, but after St. Peter had spoken, all were quiet; and they listened to Barnabas and Paul who told them of the miracles which had been worked among the Gentiles.

beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that hath given their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also will by word of mouth tell you the same things. For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no farther burden upon you than these necessary things: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which things keeping yourselves you shall do well. Fare ye well."

They therefore, being dismissed, went down to Antioch: and gathering together the multitude, delivered the epistle. Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation: but Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, with many words comforted the brethren, and confirmed them.

III. ST. PAUL'S INTERCOURSE WITH ST. PETER.

Galatians i. 11-24, ii. 1-15.

"I give you to understand, brethren,* that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it; but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion: how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it. And I made progress in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased Him, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood. Neither went I to Jerusalem to the Apostles who were before me; but I went into Arabia, and again I returned to Damas-

* I GIVE YOU TO UNDERSTAND, BRETHREN. St. Paul in his epistle to the Christians of Galatia, a province of Asia Minor, is defending his authority against the attacks of some false brethren who asserted that he had not the same spiritual power as the Apostles had, and that his gospel or teaching was different from theirs. St. Paul here proves that he received his gospel directly from our Lord Jesus Christ by revelation, not from man; nevertheless before beginning his apostleship he went up to see Peter. Afterwards he again went to Jerusalem and conferred with Peter, James, and John, comparing his teaching with theirs, and they approved of what he had preached.

cus. Then, after three years, I went to Jerusalem to see Peter,† and I tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles I saw none; saving James the brother of the Lord. Now the things which I write to you; behold before God, I lie not.

"Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea, which were in Christ. But they had heard only [that] he, who persecuted us in times past, doth now preach the faith which once he impugned. And they glorified God in me.

"Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me. And I went up according to revelation, and conferred with them the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but apart with them who seemed to be something:‡ lest perhaps I should run, or had run in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Gentile, was compelled to be circumcised. But because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privately to spy our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into servitude. To whom we yielded not by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.

"But of them who seemed to be something, (what they were some time, it is nothing to me. God accepteth not the person of man,) for to me they that seemed to be something added nothing. But contrariwise, when they had seen that to me was

† TO SEE PETER. St. Chrysostom, commenting on this text says: "He went but for this alone, to see him and honour him by his presence. He says, I went up to visit Peter. He said not to see Peter, but to *visit* Peter, as they say in becoming acquainted with great and illustrious cities. So much pains he thought it worth only to see the man." In another place the same holy writer has as follows: "Peter was the one preferred among the Apostles, the mouthpiece of the disciples, and the head of the band; *therefore*, too, Paul then went up to visit him *rather than* the rest." St. Jerome writes: "Even in that he (St. Paul) seemed to go to Jerusalem in order that he might see the Apostle; it was not to learn, as having himself also the same author of his preaching, but to show honour to the first Apostle."

‡ LEST PERHAPS I SHOULD RUN, OR HAD RUN IN VAIN. St. Jerome quotes this passage as showing that St. Paul "had no security in preaching the Gospel, unless it were confirmed by the sentence of Peter and those who were with him."

committed the Gospel * of the uncircumcision, as to Peter was that of the circumcision: (for he who wrought in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision † wrought in me also among the Gentiles.) And when they had known the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, ‡ who seemed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they go unto the circumcision: only that we should be mindful of the poor: which same thing also I was careful to do.

“But when Cephas was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, § because he was to be blamed.

* TO ME WAS COMMITTED THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION.

Non-Catholic writers have tried to show from this text that there was a division of jurisdiction, St. Peter having authority over the Jews, St. Paul having authority over the Gentiles. But if the jurisdiction in the Christian Church was divided in this way between St. Peter and St. Paul, what jurisdiction had the other Apostles? The commission to go and teach all nations was given to all the Apostles; and we know that Peter preached to Gentiles as well as to Jews (he was the first to admit the Gentiles into the church), St. Paul preached to Jews as well as to Gentiles. It is however, true, that St. Peter's field of work lay chiefly among the Jews, while that of St. Paul was chiefly among the Gentiles. For this reason the one may well be called the “minister of the circumcision,” the other “the Apostle of the Gentiles.” But there is not a particle of proof for the opinion that there was a separate and independent jurisdiction.

† APOSTLESHIP OF THE CIRCUMCISION. It is remarkable that St. Paul gives to St. Peter the same title that he gives to Christ, who while He was sent out to the House of Israel, yet had power and authority over all.

‡ JAMES, AND CEPHAS, AND JOHN. James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem, brother (*i.e.* cousin) to the Lord. St. Chrysostom and many of the Fathers, also some copies of the Scriptures, read Cephas and James and John putting Cephas (Peter) in the first place.

§ I WITHSTOOD HIM TO THE FACE BECAUSE HE WAS TO BE BLAMED. “If Peter was blamed,” says Tertullian, “certainly it was a fault of conduct, not of preaching:” and St. Cyprian, “Not even Peter, whom the Lord chose first, and upon whom He built His Church, when afterwards Paul disagreed with him respecting circumcision, claimed aught proudly or assumed aught arrogantly to himself, saying that he held the primacy, and that obedience rather was due to him by those younger and later. Nor did he despise Paul, but assented to the legitimate reasons which Paul vindicated, giving to us an example of unanimity and patience, that we may not with pertinacity love what is our own.”

Mr. Allies says: “As to the reprehension itself, it would

For before that some came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision. And to his dissimulation the rest of the Jews consented, so that Barnabas also was led by them into that dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly unto the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas before them all: ‘If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as the Jews do, how dost thou compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We by nature are Jews, and not of the Gentiles sinners.’”

IV. THE WRITINGS OF ST. PETER.

The First Epistle of St. Peter the Apostle.

CHAPTER I.

He gives thanks to God for the benefit of our being called to the true faith, and to eternal life, into which we are to enter by many tribulations. He exhorts to holiness of life, considering the holiness of God, and our redemption by the blood of Christ.

Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythynia, elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father unto the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you and peace be multiplied.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His great mercy hath regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, “unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that cannot fade, reserved in heaven for you,” who, by the power of God, are kept by faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein seem to have been not on a point of *doctrine* at all but of *conduct*. St. Peter had long ago both admitted the Gentiles into the Church, and declared that they were not bound to the Jewish law. But out of regard to the circumcised converts, he pursued a line of conduct at Antioch which they mistook to mean an approval of their error, and which needed therefore to be publicly explained. Accordingly, Peter's fault, if any there were, amounted to this, that having, with the best intention, done what was not forbidden, he had not sufficiently foreseen what others would thence infer contrary to his intention. Can this be esteemed a dogmatic error, or a proof of his not holding supreme authority? But the *event* being injurious, and contrary to the truth of the Gospel why should not Paul admonish Peter concerning it?” (St. Peter, ch. vi.)

you shall greatly rejoice, if now you must be for a little time made sorrowful in divers temptations: that the trial of your faith (much more precious than gold which is tried by the fire) may be found unto praise and glory and honour at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, you love: in Whom also now, though you see Him not, you believe: and believing, shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and diligently searched, who prophesied of the grace to come in you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them did signify, when it foretold those sufferings that are in Christ, and the glories that should follow. To whom it was revealed that, not to themselves but to you they ministered those things which are now declared to you by them that have preached the gospel to you, the Holy Ghost being sent down from heaven, on Whom the angels desire to look. Wherefore having the loins of your mind girt up, being sober, trust perfectly in the grace which is offered to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ, as children of obedience, not conformed to the former desires of your ignorance: but according to Him that hath called you, Who is holy, be you also in all manner of conversation holy; because it is written: "You shall be holy because I am holy."

And if you invoke as Father Him Who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every one's work: converse in fear during the time of your sojourning here. Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers: but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled: foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times for you, who through Him are faithful in God, Who raised Him up from the dead, and hath given Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God. Purifying your souls in the obedience of charity, with a brotherly love, from a sincere heart love one another earnestly: being born again not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God Who liveth and remaineth for ever. "For all flesh is as grass: and

all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass is withered, and the flower thereof falleth away." But the word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the Gospel hath been preached unto you.

CHAPTER II.

We are to lay aside all guile, and go to Christ the living stone: and as being now His people walk worthily of Him, with submission to superiors, and patience under sufferings.

Wherefore—laying away all malice, and all guile, and dissimulations, and envies, and all detractions—as new-born babes, desire the rational milk without guile, that thereby you may grow unto salvation. If so be you have tasted that the Lord is sweet; unto Whom coming, as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honourable by God: be you also as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Wherefore it is said in the Scripture: "Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious. And he that shall believe in Him, shall not be confounded." To you therefore, that believe, He is honour; but to them that believe not, "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner;" and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of scandal, to them who stumble at the word, neither do believe, whereunto also they are set. But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people: that you may declare His virtues, Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light, "who in time past were not a people, but are now a people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul, having your conversation good among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by the good works, which they shall behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation. Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake: whether it be to the king as excelling, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of the good: for so is the

will of God, that by doing well, you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men : as free, and not as making liberty a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thanks-worthy, if the conscience towards God a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if committing sin and being buffeted for it you endure ? But if doing well you suffer patiently ; this is thanks-worthy before God. For unto this are you called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps. " Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." Who, when He was reviled, did not revile : when He suffered, He threatened not : but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly. Who His own self bore our sins in His body upon the tree ; that we being dead to sins, should live to justice : by Whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray ; but you are now converted to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

CHAPTER III.

How wives are to behave to their husbands : what ornaments they are to seek. Exhortations to divers virtues.

In like manner also let wives be subject to their husbands : that if any believe not the word, they may be won without the word, by the conversation of the wives, considering your chaste conversation with fear. Whose adorning let it not be the outward plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel : but the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptibility of a quiet and meek spirit, which is rich in the sight of God. For after this manner heretofore the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands : as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord : whose daughters you are, doing well, and not fearing any disturbance.

Ye husbands, likewise dwelling with them according to knowledge, giving honour to the female as to the weaker vessel, and as to the co-heirs of the grace of life : that your prayers be not hindered. And in fine be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merci-

ful, modest, humble : not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing : for unto this are you called, that you may inherit a blessing. " For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil, and do good : let him seek after peace, and pursue it. Because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears unto their prayers : but the countenance of the Lord [is] upon them that do evil things."

And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good ? But if also you suffer anything for justice sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their fear, and be not troubled. But sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts, being ready always to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you. But with modesty and fear, having a good conscience : that whereas they speak evil of you, they may be ashamed who falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better doing well (if such be the will of God) to suffer than doing ill. Because Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust : that He might offer us to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh, but enlivened in the spirit. In which also coming He preached to those spirits that were in prison : which had been some time incredulous, when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the ark was a building : wherein a few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. Whereunto baptism being of the like form, now saveth you also : not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the examination of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Who is on the right hand of God, swallowing down death, that we might be made heirs of life everlasting : being gone into heaven, the angels and powers and virtues being made subject to Him.

CHAPTER IV.

Exhortations to cease from sin ; to mutual charity ; to do all for the glory of God ; to be willing to suffer for Christ.

Christ therefore having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought : for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sins : that now he may live the rest of his time in the

CHAPTER V.

He exhorts both priests and laity to their respective duties, and recommends to all humility and watchfulness.

flesh, not after the desires of men, but according to the will of God. For the time past is sufficient to have fulfilled the will of the Gentiles, for them who have walked in riotousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and unlawful worshipping of idols. Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same confusion of riotousness, speaking evil of you. Who shall render account to Him, Who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For, this cause was the Gospel preached also to the dead, that they might be judged indeed, according to men in the flesh; but may live according to God in the Spirit. But the end of all is at hand. Be prudent therefore and watch in prayers.

But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring. As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another: as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth: that in all things God may be honoured through Jesus Christ: to Whom is glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.

Dearly beloved, think not strange the burning heat which is to try you, as if some new thing happened to you. But if you partake of the suffering of Christ, rejoice that when His glory shall be revealed you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you be reproached for the name of Christ, you shall be blessed: for that which is of the honour, glory and power of God, and that which is His Spirit, resteth upon you.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or a coveter of other men's things. But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name. For the time is that judgment should begin at the house of God: and if first at us, what shall be the end of them that believe not the Gospel of God? And if the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God, commend their souls in good deeds to the faithful Creator.

The ancients therefore that are among you, I beseech, who am myself also an ancient and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, as also a partaker of that glory which is to be revealed in time to come: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it not by constraint, but willingly according to God; not for filthy lucre's sake, but voluntarily: neither as lording it over the clergy, but being made a pattern of the flock from the heart. And when the prince of pastors shall appear, you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory.

In like manner, ye young men, be subject to the ancients. And do ye all insinuate humility one to another, "for God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He giveth grace." Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation: casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you. Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour: whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will Himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you. To Him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.

By Sylvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I think, I have written briefly: beseeching and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein you stand. The Church that is in Babylon,* elected

* THE CHURCH THAT IS IN BABYLON. Dr. Ellicott (Anglican Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol) says: "It may be called the established interpretation that the place here meant is *Rome*. We never hear of Peter being in the East and the thing itself is improbable, whereas nothing but Protestant prejudice can stand against the historical evidence that St. Peter sojourned and died in Rome." *The Speakers' Commentary*, in a note on this text, says: "We have to remark (1) that the city of Babylon was certainly not the seat of a Christian community; (2) that no ancient record has the slightest trace of St. Peter's work or presence in Chaldæa; (3) that all ancient authorities are unanimous in the assertion that the latter year or years of his life

together with you, saluteth you: and so doth my son Mark. Salute one another with a holy kiss. Grace be to all you who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The Second Epistle of St. Peter the Apostle.

CHAPTER I.

He exhorts them to join all other virtues with their faith, in order so secure their salvation.

Simon Peter, servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained equal faith with us in the justice of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace be accomplished in the knowledge of God, and of Christ Jesus our Lord.

As all things of His divine power, which appertain to life and godliness, are given us, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us by His own proper glory and virtue. By whom He hath given us most great and precious promises, that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature: flying the corruption of that concupiscence

were passed in the West of the Roman Empire. On the other hand, Babylon was well known in Asia Minor during the lifetime of St. John as the symbolical designation of Rome, and, as was before pointed out, the whole place has a symbolical form or tone. Accordingly we find an absolute consensus of ancient interpreters that here Babylon must be understood as equivalent to Rome."

The Abbé Fouard says that the fact of St. Peter's having resided at Rome "is hardly ever disputed now-a-days: for although no contemporary writer makes any allusion to that event, we have a series of witnesses in testimony of it, from the third century back to apostolic times, together casting a continuous light on this turning point of history."

That St. Peter not only resided in Rome, but also was the first Bishop of that see, is likewise attested by innumerable witnesses of the first five centuries, while not a single early writer can be cited against this truth, nor has the See of Rome, ever been assigned to any other Apostles, though the name of St. Paul is frequently joined to that of St. Peter, as though he were founder with St. Peter of Christianity in Rome. St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, whose youth was spent in the company of St. Polycarp, a disciple of St. John the Apostle, speaks of Rome as "the greatest, most ancient and illustrious Church, the one founded and constituted at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul." Tertullian writes: "The Church of the Romans recounts that Clement was ordained by Peter." St. Cyprian (A.D. 250) calls Rome "the Chair of Peter and the ruling Church, whence the Unity of the priesthood has its source." For full treatment of this subject the reader is referred to *Was St. Peter Bishop of Rome?* by C. F. B. Allnat; (Catholic Truth Society, price 2d.)

which is in the world. And you, employing all care, minister in your faith, virtue: and in virtue, knowledge: and in knowledge, abstinence: and in abstinence, patience: and in patience, godliness: and in godliness, love of brotherhood: and in love of brotherhood, charity. For if these things be with you, and abound, they will make you to be neither empty nor untruthful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that hath not these things with him is blind, and groping, having forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Wherefore, brethren, labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election. For doing these things, you shall not sin at any time. For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. For which cause I will begin to put you always in remembrance of these things though indeed you know them, and are confirmed in the present truth. But I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance. Being assured that the laying away of this my tabernacle is at hand,* according as our Lord Jesus Christ also hath signified to me. And I will do my endeavour, that after my decease also, you may often have whereby you may keep a memory of these things. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ: but having been made eye-witness of His majesty. For, He received from God the Father, honour and glory; this voice coming down to Him from the excellent glory, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I have pleased Myself, hear ye Him." And this voice we heard brought from heaven when we were with Him in the holy mount.

And we have the more firm prophetic word, whereunto you do well to attend, as to a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the

* THE LAYING AWAY OF THIS MY TABERNACLE IS AT HAND. Our Blessed Lord, had already foretold to St. Peter, that he should glorify God by martyrdom. It is the generally received opinion that St. Peter suffered at Rome, being crucified with his head downwards. The 29th June, A.D. 67, is assigned as the date of his death, and there are strong reasons for believing that St. Paul was beheaded on the same day, also at Rome.

day-star arise in your hearts: understanding this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation.* For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time: but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER II.

He warns them against false teachers, and foretells their punishment.

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be among you lying teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord Who bought them: bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their riotousnesses, through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you. Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their perdition slumbereth not.

For if God spared not the angels that sinned: but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments, to be reserved unto judgment: and spared not the original world, but preserved Noe the eighth person, the preacher of justice, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And reducing the cities of the Sodomites and of the Gomorrhites into ashes, condemned them to be overthrown, making them an example to those that should after act wickedly; and delivered just Lot, oppressed by the injustice and lewd conversation of the wicked; for in sight and hearing he was just: dwelling among them, who from day to day vexed the just soul with unjust works. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly from temptation, but to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be tormented: and especially them

who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government; audacious, self-willed, they fear not to bring in sects, blaspheming.

Whereas angels who are greater in strength and power, bring not against themselves a railing judgment. But these men, as irrational beasts, naturally tending to the snare and to destruction, blaspheming those things which they know not, shall perish in their corruption, receiving the reward of their injustice, counting for a pleasure the delights of a day: stains and spots, sporting themselves to excess, rioting in their feasts with you, having eyes full of adultery and of sin that ceaseth not: alluring unstable souls, having their heart exercised with covetousness, children of malediction: leaving the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam of Bosor, who loved the wages of iniquity, but had a check of his madness, the dumb beast used to the yoke, which speaking with man's voice, forbade the folly of the prophet.

These are fountains without water and clouds tossed with whirlwinds, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved. For, speaking proud words of vanity, they allure by the desires of fleshly riotousness, those who for a little while escape, such as converse in error: promising them liberty, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption. For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also he is the slave. For if, flying from the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they be again entangled in them and overcome: their latter state is become unto them worse than the former. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them. For that of the true proverb has happened to them: The dog is returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

CHAPTER III.

Against scoffers, denying the second coming of Christ, he declares the sudden dissolution of this world, and exhorts to holiness of life.

Behold this second epistle I write to you, my dearly beloved, in which I stir up by way of admonition your sincere mind: that you may be mindful

* NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE IS MADE BY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION. In these two verses, St. Peter gives us the true idea of Holy Scripture, *i. e.*, that it is the word of God Himself. The prophets and other sacred writers spoke not of themselves but as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit Who spake in them. Hence their words must be interpreted by the help of the same Divine Spirit, not by the judgment of mere men. Thus our own St. Bede says on this passage, "Wherefore as the prophets wrote not their own words but the words of God, so their reader cannot use his own interpretation lest he wander from the meaning of the truth, but he should in every wise observe how He that wrote wished His words to be understood."

of those words which I told you before from the holy prophets, and of your Apostles, of the precepts of the Lord and Saviour. Knowing this first, that in the last days there shall come deceitful scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying: "Where is His promise or His coming? for since the time that the fathers slept, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." For this they are wilfully ignorant of, that the heavens were before, and the earth, out of water, and through water, consisting by the word of God. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of the ungodly men.

But of this one thing be not ignorant, my beloved, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord delayeth not His promise, as some imagine: but dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance. But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up.

Seeing then that all these things are to be dissolved, what manner of people ought you to be in holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord, by which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with the burning heat. But we look for new heavens and a new earth according to His promises, in which justice dwelleth.

Wherefore, dearly beloved, seeing that you look for these things, be diligent that ye may be found undefiled and unspotted to Him in peace. And account the long-suffering of our Lord salvation, as also our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you: as also in

all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are certain things hard to be understood,* which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, brethren, knowing these things before, take heed, lest being led aside by the error of the unwise, you fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen.

A Prayer to St. Peter.

Ant. Thou art the Shepherd of the sheep, O Prince of the Apostles; to thee were given the keys of the kingdom of Heaven.

V. Thou art Peter.

R. And upon this Rock I will build My Church.

Let us pray.

Raise us up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, by the apostolic might of Thy blessed Apostle, Peter; that the weaker we are in ourselves, the more powerful may be the assistance whereby we are strengthened through his intercession, that thus, ever fortified by the protection of Thine Apostle, we may never yield to sin, nor be overwhelmed by adversity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

* CERTAIN THINGS HARD TO BE UNDERSTOOD. As in Chap. i. 20, 21, St. Peter tells us what the Scripture is and how it must be interpreted; so here he ranks the Epistles of St. Paul with the other sacred writings, and condemns certain erroneous private interpretations which were already put forward in the Apostle's lifetime. The words "speaking in them of these things" are referred by some to the exhortation immediately preceding them. Others, with good reason, understand them of the whole passage concerning "the day of the Lord." According to the reading of the best Greek MSS., the words "in which" may be connected with the words "all his epistles." St. Augustine considers that certain texts of St. Paul concerning faith and the works of the law are among the passages of which St. Peter is here speaking. Certainly those words have since been misunderstood by many and wrested by the unstable to their own destruction.